LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity

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Editor: R. Palme Dutt

What of Democracy? * R.P.D.

Mr. Butler's 'Prosperity' * Frederick Cape

East Germany Revisited * Michael Barratt Brown

The Dockers and Mr. Deakin * Sam Henderson

Terror in the Middle East * C. Allen

U.S. Elections * Derek Kartun

Why I am a Communist * William Morris

December, 1954

One shilling and sixpence

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CHRISTMAS COMICS

A CONFESSION of faith by a big-money publisher should not pass unnoticed. During the campaign against Horror Comics, a publisher who is also a big distributor of American wares, was stung into public utterance by the holier-than-thou attitude of a daily newspaper. Many people, he wrote to the *Newsagents and Booksellers' Review*, might say that Horror Comics were 'suppressed by public opinion. Did they but realise, there is no such thing as public opinion until the Press decides that there will be. The minority is always stronger than the majority when it is backed by vested interest.' The Labour movement is not unaware of the power of vested interest generally and the millionaire press in particular; but it is startling to overhear for once Big Business talking out loud to themselves. Just how enormous are the vested interests of press and publishing house in 'moulding public opinion' may be judged by this small side-line. More comics are still sold on the U.S. and Canadian news-stands than any other sort of book—80 million a month, of which 20 million are just these Horror Comics, with titles like *Vampire, Phantom, Tales from the Crypt, Haunt of Fear* and so on. Purchasers are too engrossed by the vampires in these pages to notice the vampires on their backs. This American culture is for export, too. Although meeting a recent check in Britain, it makes its way round the world—or, at least, the 'Free World'. A reader serving in the Far East describes his gloom and boredom at *'roaming the bookstalls trying vainly to find something real to read among the piled up stocks of Yank magazines, and coming up with such treasures as the latest Superman or Horror Comic. You don't know how refreshing it is to get my* LABOUR MONTHLY *at last—clear, understandable, essential. More power to your pens!'* And a speedy return home for him, out of the occupation army holding down colonial peoples, back home where he belongs with his family in Lancashire. Let's hope he gets this number early and isn't confined to Comics this Christmas.

A Mint Monthly

THOSE WHO always have their year's copies bound should order soon, as we hope to have very early delivery of some, perhaps in time for the New Year. The price is as usual: £1 5s. or 10s. 6d. if loose sets are returned in good condition. But if you don't order *at once*, you may have to wait for a second binding. Librarians of Trade Union branches, please note! It is an investment which appreciates every year. Few can hope to keep unbound copies in the mint condition of some 1921 copies sent us recently by an old reader in Essex: Number 4 of Volume I (October, 1921) still had round it the wrapper advertising Bernard Shaw's famous article *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*.

Can anyone help 'F.B.' who needs single copies of *1921*, July, September; *1922*, June; *1924*, May, July; *1930*, March? Write to him c/o The Manager.

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Notes of the Month

What of Democracy?

'How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of Negroes?'
SAMUEL JOHNSON

THE Report on British Guiana throws further light on the peculiar conception of 'democracy' which is becoming current in the countries of the Atlantic Pact or within the chain of the far-flung American military alliances. We have grown accustomed to the arrogant insolence with which the bandit association of all the great colony-owning powers, dominating and exploiting hundreds of millions of colonial or semi-colonial peoples all over the world, present their illegal military pact as a league for the defence of 'freedom' and 'democracy' against the menace of the victory of the popular liberation movements, presented as the menace of 'tyranny'. Our ears have long been deafened by the nasal accents

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of Southern Senators, advancing to the post of Secretary of State from States where the majority of the population have been terrorised from receiving or exercising electoral rights, delivering sanctimonious lectures on 'democracy' and 'free elections' to European peoples who won their freedom in battle against fascism. We have been taught to admire Syngman Rhee and Chiang and Marshal Pibul and Zahedi and Nasser and Papagos and Franco as champions of 'democracy'. We have even been hardened to admonitions to tolerate and support the re-establishment of Nazi militarism, in the name of a formula about mythical 'free elections', meaning elections under foreign military occupation and foreign control to ensure a reactionary outcome. We have not failed to observe how the extension of the blessings of American approval or military alliance, from Guatemala to Pakistan to Iran, has invariably been accompanied by the extinction of whatever parliamentary democratic institutions existed and the substitution of military dictatorship. But the first really classic, explicit and copiously documented definition of the imperialist conception of 'democracy' and 'free elections' has now been provided by the Report of the British Guiana Constitutional Commission, signed by Sir James Robertson, Sir Donald Jackson, and Mr. George Woodcock, C.B.E., Assistant Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, and duly approved by the Tory Government.

'Free Elections'

Let us begin with a statement of that impeccable and expert representative of 'democracy', Mr. Herbert Morrison (who banned the *Daily Worker,* and for 19 months doggedly maintained that ban in the face of the demand of the labour movement for its removal) in a speech at the Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party this year:

> How long is it since Socialists had any question in their minds about the elementary right of a people to have free elections in which they can speak and vote as they like? How long has this been a bargaining factor in their minds?

A most emphatic statement of principle in favour of 'the right of a people to have free elections in which they can speak and vote as they like'. No qualifications here. No cautious reservations about 'except for colonial peoples' or 'except for coloured people'. And now let us come to the application of this grand principle in British Guiana, as set out in the Commission Report, expressing not only the views of Toryism, but signed by the Assistant Secretary of the

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Trades Union Congress (without even the normal precaution of some little timid minute of dissent on details), and not so far repudiated by either the Labour Party or Trades Union Congress. Between Toryism and official Labour on this matter there would thus appear to be no gulf. But between the resounding principle of Mr. Morrison proclaimed on the platform and the practice approved by him in the real imperialist world there will be discovered to be a remarkable gulf.

A Crucial Test

A year ago, in these Notes for December, 1953, under the title 'Communism and the Constitution', we called attention to the significance of the Tory armed coup against democratically elected Ministers in Guiana as 'a test and a barometer for the future of the British Empire, of British politics and of the British labour movement'. There was no question of the facts. In elections by universal suffrage, which fulfilled every definition of 'free elections' as understood by Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Morrison (that is, with the heaviest weighting on the side of reaction and the big monopolies, controlling the entire daily press, openly subsidising anti-democratic stooge organisations and lying propaganda, mobilising the church, and maintaining anti-democratic bans on literature), the People's Progressive Party received an absolute majority of the votes—unlike the Tory Government in this country, based on a minority of the votes. Within six months the Tory Government sent warships and troops, without even the pretext of any situation of violence or disorder, to remove the democratically elected Ministers and establish an open dictatorship. We suggested that this armed aggression to replace democratically elected Ministers by a police state manifestly called for the operation of the Atlantic Pact according to its proclaimed objectives:

> In the face of this open armed assault on democratic institutions and elected majorities the innocent might believe that the moment had arrived for every signatory of the Atlantic Alliance to spring into action as one man, and for every voluble advocate of the Treaty to cheer on its forces in their valiant task to repel this armed aggression. But did they? Not on your life. The British Tory Government carried out the armed aggression. The United States Government proclaimed its applause. And right-wing Labour leaders leaped forward to denounce the democratic victims of armed aggression, and to boast that they, too, had they been in office, would not have hesitated to send armed invading forces.

We further called attention to the significance of the Lyttelton Doctrine, proclaimed by the then Colonial Secretary both in Parlia-

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ment and at the Conservative Conference, that 'Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to tolerate the setting up of Communist states in the British Commonwealth'—*i.e.*, that the results of democratic elections will not be respected in Britain or anywhere in the British Empire if such results are displeasing to the ruling class.

Voice of the People

The Commission Report confirms the already familiar picture, and offers no new evidence going beyond what was already available in the White Paper. On the contrary, the Commission Report emphasises the overwhelming majority popular support for the People's Progressive Party, and on this ground opposes the holding of elections and supports the maintenance of dictatorship. The difficulty, they explain, lies in the fact that the people of Guiana are unfortunately united in their demand for self-government and improved conditions, and refuse to be caught in the trap of a two-party system to defeat their united wishes:

> There is not in British Guiana that diversity in the electorate which in Great Britain inevitably provides for the existence of at least two parties of differing outlook with distinctive programmes appealing to differing sections of the community. . . . The great majority of the ordinary people in British Guiana have for the moment a common outlook in that they are dissatisfied with their conditions and are anxious for swift and sweeping improvements which they believe can only be achieved when they have an increasing say in the management of their affairs.

They admit that the People's Progressive Party correctly reflected this outlook of the majority of the people:

> The Party assured itself of popular support by concentrating upon and excessively simplifying those issues upon which most of the people were agreed—the demand for self-government, and end to colonialism and improvement of conditions.

It might be thought that the conclusion to be drawn by any genuine democrat from these admissions and undisputed facts would be to respect the will of the people and their elected representatives. But that is not the conclusion drawn by these peculiar 'democrats' of Tory and Labour Imperialism.

How to Defeat Democracy

What is the conclusion drawn by the Commission from this admitted support of the majority of the population and of the electorate voting for the P.P.P.? That the will of the people should prevail? On the contrary. The problem of true 'democracy', as understood by these experts, is how to prevent the will of the people

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prevailing. Lest this might be thought an exaggeration, the following extraordinary passage is worth quoting. The Commission is dealing with the evidence submitted by the P.P.P. representatives before the Waddington Commission in 1951, which drew up the Constitution. The Commission solemnly complains that the P.P.P. representatives actually believed that democracy meant that the will of the people and their elected representatives should prevail, in place of understanding that the true problem of democracy is how to 'impose some check' upon that will.

> Having asserted the broad principle that 'sovereignty rests with the people', the witnesses seemed quite incapable of the effort needed to reconcile with that principle any proposal seriously intended to impose some check upon an elected majority.

Such is the Tory and Labour imperialist interpretation of 'democracy'.

Indefinite Dictatorship

From this fundamental principle the grand conclusion on the true nature of Churchillian and Morrisonian 'democracy' is drawn by the Guiana Commission Report. 'Free democratic elections' are permissible—so long as the machinery can be so manipulated as to ensure a result satisfactory to the ruling class. If the result threatens to be unsatisfactory to the ruling class, 'democratic freedom' must be suspended until suitable conditions are established. In the original announcement Mr. Hopkinson, speaking for the British Government on December 7 of last year, had stated that the constitution would be suspended and the system of open dictatorship by the Governor maintained 'over the next 12 months, or, we hope, not much more'. That is to say, it was hoped that during these 12 months a suitable stooge party could be built up to replace the P.P.P., or the P.P.P. could be split. These plans, though assiduously pursued, have so far been unsuccessful. *The Times* correspondent on September 13, 1954, reported that the P.P.P. was 'still deeply entrenched':

> There is little doubt what the result of another election would be. The P.P.P. remains the only organised political body in the sugar estates and the villages. The new party, the National Democratic Party, has made little impact and is almost unknown in many places.

If elections were held, the wrong party would win? Conclusion: hold no elections; suspend the constitution; maintain dictatorship to prepare the ground. After 12 months the people still stick to their party? In that case the Commission concludes that there is no alternative but to continue the dictatorship indefinitely:

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> We can find no escape from the logical conclusion that so long as the present leadership and policies of the People's Progressive Party continue there is no way in which any real measure of self government can be restored in British Guiana without the certainty that the country will again be subjected to constitutional crisis.

Long live 'democracy'—*alias* dictatorship.

From Guiana to Vietnam

Is the problem of Guiana peculiar to Guiana? On the contrary: Guiana only lays bare the essence of the imperialist conception of 'democracy' with classic clearness, because the ground was virgin ground, and the elaborate conditions had not yet been prepared for ensuring that 'free elections' would produce the required outcome under a deceptive show of 'freedom'. Turn to Vietnam. The Western negotiators at Geneva accounted it a triumph to have secured that elections for the whole of a united Vietnam would not be held for two years, till 1956. Why? Because every Western correspondent testified that, if elections were held at once, 90 per cent. of the population in South Vietnam would vote for the Vietminh or Vietnam People's Front represented by the Vietnam People's Republic. The ground must first be 'prepared'. The subsequent crisis of the imperialist-sponsored Bao Dai régime in South Vietnam has revealed the crumbling ground for these calculations:

> The outlook for the elections, due to be held within two years, is bleak indeed. It can be improved only if the Western Powers are ready to send in much economic and other aid in an attempt to build up morale.
>
> (*The Times*, November 12, 1954.)

Not the will of the people, but how to circumvent the will of the people, is seen as the problem of 'democracy' from the imperialist standpoint. Therefore 'much economic and other aid' must be sent in from outside by the Western Powers in order to secure the required outcome. The outlook still looks 'bleak'? In that case Mr. Dulles demands a meeting of the South-East Asia Pact Powers, with special reference to Vietnam, and emphasises that the menace is not armed aggression, but 'internal subversion'. They fear free elections.

Dictatorship in Pakistan

Turn to Pakistan. The United Front in East Pakistan, associating all the democratic parties, including the Communists, swept the elections in March of this year with a 97 per cent. vote. What followed? On May 19 the Pakistan Government signed a Military

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Treaty with the United States. Within less than a fortnight of the country thus being brought within the American military orbit, on May 30 the Governor-General of Pakistan cleared out the democratically elected Ministry and imposed a military dictatorship under General Mirza. This was done under Section 92A of the 1935 Baldwin Government of India Act—thus illustrating the peculiar character of the 'freedom' conferred on Pakistan by Lord Mountbatten and the Labour Government. By October the same Governor-General completed the coup for Pakistan as a whole, dissolved the Constituent Assembly, proclaimed a state of emergency and established the military dictatorship of General Mirza over the whole country. Premier Mohammed Ali explained to the *Observer* correspondent (October 31) that 'he had agreed to remain in office because the only alternative was undisguised military rule and arrest for himself and his friends', and added: 'What I have done is too terrible, and no one can help me.' General Mirza explained his attitude to democracy on November 11:

> Pakistan is obviously not yet ripe for the practice of democracy as the term is understood in Britain or America.

'As the term is understood in Britain or America.' Admirable insight. The 'democratic' imperialist press of Britain lost no time to applaud the downfall of democracy and victory of dictatorship in Pakistan:

> Pakistan is moving away from democracy, but no democrat who knows the facts would at the moment have it otherwise. . . . Pakistan has virtually become a military dictatorship. (*Economist*, October 30, 1954.)

Long live 'democracy'—*alias* dictatorship.

Blood and Oil in Iran

Turn to Iran. Forty-eight years have passed since the opening of the democratic revolution in Iran, which was hailed by democrats all over the world, extorted from the Shah the establishment of the Majlis, and began the long and heroic struggle against the domination of foreign imperialism and its puppets, which is now reaching its highest point. In 1951 the mighty democratic movement, sustaining and pressing forward the Government of Moussadeq, brought about the nationalisation of the oil industry. Warships and troops were immediately mobilised by imperialism; but open military intervention was rendered impossible thanks to the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921. Two years of threats, intrigue, pressure, economic boycott and subsidised subversion from the side of

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imperialism followed to endeavour to compel the Moussadeq Government to yield. When all else failed the military coup of General Zahedi was engineered in 1953, and the oil agreement with the foreign consortium followed in August of this year. The oil agreement with the military dictatorship, received with jubilation by the 'democratic' representatives of imperialism, was signed in the blood of the Iranian people. A terror without parallel, even in these days of imperialist terror, has followed. The Death Law against all Communists or supporters of Communist policies (the police code term for all democrats), promulgated in November, has been accompanied by the wholesale arrest of 10,000 Iranian patriots and democratic leaders, indescribable tortures and extending death sentences and executions. Lest it be imagined that this is only the savagery of a Middle Eastern dictator, it should be firmly understood that the military dictatorship of General Zahedi only exists by the support of foreign imperialism, British and American, and that Britain still holds the predominant share in the new oil consortium. The last words of the former Foreign Secretary, Hussein Fatemi, who led the fight for the nationalisation of the oil industry, as he was shot, were: 'This is Britain's work. The British are murdering me.' We of the labour and democratic movement in Britain cannot escape our special and urgent responsibility for the fate of the democrats of Iran.

America and Democracy

Perhaps it may be suggested that this extending offensive against democracy, which is spreading like a prairie fire through country after country subjected to the Atlantic Pact or brought into the American orbit, applies 'only' to colonial and semi-colonial countries, and that therefore Western 'democracy' at the imperialist centre may hug itself in sublime immunity. What is happening in the United States today should shatter this fond illusion. The fire kindled in the house of his neighbours has not left the incendiary unscorched. Eighty-nine years ago Abraham Lincoln, immediately following the Civil War, warned the nation that 'corporations have been enthroned' and foretold the prospect that 'the money power of the country will endeavour to prolong its reign by working on the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed'. But even Abraham Lincoln's worst fears never foresaw the present outcome. Step by step American institutions are being remoulded and reorganised along the Hitler road. The most moderate democratic opinion in Britain has been

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shocked and alarmed, even though for the British public the deeper process which is happening has been partially hidden under the cloak of concentrating only on the vocal belligerent aspect expressed in McCarthyism. The successive stages of the Smith Act, the Taft-Hartley Act, the McCarran Act and now the Communist Control Act of this year, have followed the Hitler technique of delivering the attack on all working-class rights and organisation, independent Trade Unionism, and democratic expression and opinion in the name of the attack on Communism. Nor has there been lacking the penetration of American anti-democratic influence and intervention in Britain.

Warning Signs for Britain

And Britain? Is respect for democracy so deeply planted in the hearts of the ruling class imperialists, who have abundantly shown their outlook in the colonial sphere, or for that matter in the hearts of the leading right-wing Labour imperialists, that they will regard their present entrenchments as sufficient if once the current of the popular movement and electoral verdicts should begin to move against them? The modern period has been marked by an extending series of encroachments on democratic rights as the working-class movement has advanced, illustrated in such legislation as the Emergency Powers Act, Public Order Act, etc. We have already had occasion to note the explicit warning given by the Lyttelton Doctrine (never repudiated by the Labour Party) that 'Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to tolerate the setting up of Communist States in the British Commonwealth'. The example of Guiana as the occasion for the promulgation of this doctrine has made clear that the reference is to any Left Labour Government, including Communists or working-class representatives accused of sympathy with Communism, which may obtain a constitutional parliamentary majority. This is accordingly equivalent to a plain statement of official Toryism, with the acquiescence of official Labour, that if the majority of the electorate were to return to power a united labour movement, including the Communist Party, to fulfil the programme of the British Road to Socialism, the electoral verdict would not be respected. We may recall the prediction of Baldwin, speaking in New York in August, 1939, that 'if a party majority were ever to play with the idea of forcing on the country their will before the country as a whole approved of that, we might find ourselves near to revolution'. Guiana and Britain are not entirely two worlds apart.

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Mr. Gaitskell, Mr. Morrison and Democracy

Nor is this outlook confined to Toryism. In the August issue of this journal we reprinted the answer of Mr. Gaitskell to the query of the *Ceylon Daily News* (March 12, 1954) on his attitude 'if a Communist Party was in a position to take power by the ballot'. Mr. Gaitskell replied that 'if a Communist Party is near to taking power' (*i.e.*, by the ballot) 'the democratic parties are entitled to stop it by suppressing the Communist Party'. Mr. Morrison is reported to have given an identical answer recently in a B.B.C. 'Any Questions' series. Plain enough. Not the will of the majority of the electorate, but the will of Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Morrison and their associates must prevail at all costs and by all means and methods. If 99 per cent. of the people want people's democracy, Mr. Lyttelton, Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Morrison are justified to suppress them by force on behalf of the 1 per cent.—in the name of 'democracy'. Long live 'democracy'—*alias* dictatorship. From this it is only a step to the final Humpty-Dumpty glory of Mr. C. P. Mayhew, who, when Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was asked by the young people at the Conference of Education for World Citizenship whether he regarded South American dictatorships, South Africa and similar associates of the American war camp as democracies, and replied:

> When I say a country is a democracy I mean that it is not a Communist country.
>
> (*News Chronicle*, December 31, 1948.)

Exactly. From the mouths of infants—or at any rate with the aid of infants—the truth slips out.

Bi-Partisan System versus Democracy

These are by no means remote questions of the distant future for Britain. For the moment the representatives of the ruling class, and their allies in the right-wing leadership of the labour movement, feel sufficiently entrenched in the security of their bi-partisan system, monopolising parliamentary representation in the hands of two governing parties, with the basic identity of policy concealed behind the appearance of freedom of choice.

> We have undoubtedly here at home a great measure of that bi-partisanship, as it is called, which plays such a large part in the United States.
>
> (Sir Winston Churchill at the Lord Mayor's banquet, November 9, 1954.)

But even here the rift of the class struggle begins to break through the smooth working of the system. The advancing strength of the

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Left, communist and non-communist in co-operation, in the working-class movement has begun to find reflection in the rising strength of the militant opposition vote, now reaching two to three millions in the face of every attempt at obstruction, in the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party. The prospect of the militant Left advancing to majority strength within the Trade Unions and the Labour Party fills the representatives of capitalist policy with alarm. For in that case the present shadow-boxing of the two Front Benches, concealing the reality of the dictatorship of monopoly capital, would give place to the real battle of opposing political parties, representing opposing classes, for power. The working people, the true representatives of democracy, by shattering the obstructions of the bi-partisan system, would open the way to the decisive battle for democracy, that is, for the political power of the working people.

Democracy and the Labour Movement

Against this prospect the enemies of democracy are actively engaged to build higher their ramparts of obstruction. Already *The Times,* when the issue of Scarborough was in the balance, has propounded the doctrine that the policies of the two governing parties must not be decided democratically by their party conference, but from above by their leaders as the only truly 'democratic' doctrine:

> A political leader who commits himself to a line dictated by a party conference binds himself to the decision of a body other than the sovereign people. This is a denial of the democratic principle.
>
> (*The Times,* September 25, 1954.)

In other words, the *fuehrerprinzip* is proclaimed—in the name of 'democracy'. On their side the right-wing leadership in the Labour Party seek to dig in to maintain their permanent hold against the advance of the mass movement. The reversal of mandates at Scarborough is proclaimed to represent the 'true democratic principle'. The right-wing leadership enlarges its offensive against the democratic rights of Communists in the labour movement to an extending offensive against the democratic rights of a widening range of left-wing representatives. The battle for democracy in Britain is thus reaching its sharpest urgency at the moment within the labour movement, at the same time as it needs to be fought in the broader political sphere. The battle for democracy in Britain will grow yet sharper, as the struggle for Britain's future deepens.

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Stalin's Final Counsel

In his last speech, to the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October, 1952, Stalin declared:

> Before, the bourgeoisie allowed itself to indulge in liberalism, to uphold bourgeois democratic freedoms, and thereby built up popularity for itself among the people. Now not a trace of liberalism remains. . . . The banner of bourgeois democratic freedoms has been thrown overboard. I think that it is you, the representatives of the communist and democratic parties, who will have to raise this banner and carry it forward. There is no one else to raise it.

Today, in the light of the experience and developing struggles of these two years, as the frenzied offensive of the American war camp against democracy is extending to extinguish even the limited bourgeois democratic freedoms in country after country all over the world, it is timely to recall these words.

November 17, 1954. R.P.D.

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MR. BUTLER'S 'PROSPERITY'

FREDERICK CAPE

MR. BUTLER may not bask in the smiles of Sir Winston Churchill to the same extent as Sir Anthony Eden, but as Chancellor of the Exchequer he has the confidence and support of the City, of the big business interests who look upon him as their beloved son. To them, as to the members of the television-tamed Tory Conference, Mr. Butler's speeches are manna from heaven. Already they imagine themselves victorious in a general election. Butler boasts that he has brought 'prosperity' to Britain: and already the Conservative Clubs are shaping out their election campaign along Butler's line. He claims that his policy has brought success: and his propaganda is summed up in his phrase 'Invest in success'.

One would not imagine that hard-headed trust leaders and financiers would need a Butler to tell them to invest. The Board rooms of Unilevers or I.C.I. or Vickers—or even of Courtaulds—may have taken out their blue prints and doubled everything when they read Mr. Butler's speech. But it is doubtful. Capitalism invests for reasons of profit. The argumentation for 'invest in success' is a cover argument for achieving other purposes. Partly a gloss for the election (the Labour Party can hardly be said to be offering anything, even a lick and a promise). Partly to reduce taxes (by cutting the social services) and to justify the £125,000,000 E.P.L. gift to industry—for it is argued that industry has no money left after taxation although the 2,195 industrial companies, which published reports in the first nine months of 1954 had reserves of £2,913,444,000, compared with an issued ordinary capital of £1,594,529,000 and earned 17 per cent. more for ordinary dividends and reserve. Partly, in this talk about dividend limitations, to justify wage restraint and higher insurance contributions. But mainly, one suspects, for more fundamental reasons. All is not well with the economy, from the point of view of the ruling class.

Mr. Butler, and Mr. Cobbold of the Bank of England, at the Bankers' Dinner, both sounded an alarm at the danger of the economy following the 'primrose path' of inflation. Why so? We need to recall that the Tory Government has failed in two main objectives. It has failed to reduce the standard of living of the organ-

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ised workers to the full extent that they had hoped and it has failed to bamboozle Wall Street into making convertibility of sterling possible, which would have enabled the City to stand up to Wall Street. As Mr. Franks, late Ambassador at Washington, now chairman of Lloyds Bank, recently complained, the Americans do not believe Britain is a World Power. The two objectives were tied up together, for the capital fund which was to make convertibility possible was to come from what the British people were to go without.

The resistance of the working class, and indeed of the people as a whole, to the cutting of real wages has been a thorn in the flesh of capital.

The check to wage cutting must not be exaggerated. The ruling class has done pretty well. But not as well as it needed to do. Perhaps the ruling class hoped also to get unemployment. If so, it soon found that this policy was socially disastrous, and as far as in it lay—which is not in the long run so very far—it took measures to maintain full employment too. But this meant that a deflationary credit policy and even convertibility (for deflation, cutting of costs, reduction of imports, was necessary for convertibility just as it was hoped convertibility would make deflation appear 'inevitable'), was jettisoned. And so, faced with this resistance to the normal processes of capitalist 'freedom', and particularly with the resistance of the workers to wage cuts, the capitalist directors tried to get the same results in other ways.

There were two prongs to the drive, directed to get more of 'something for nothing' from the workers at home on the one hand and from the colonial workers on the other.

One is the drive at home for productivity. More investment, of course, is another way of saying higher productivity. You can increase productivity by introducing more efficient machinery, more automatic machinery and much of the capital investment in certain firms is directed to this end. But you can also do it by longer hours; only, longer hours are an uneconomic method of achieving it. But this method has the advantage that overtime (and overtime earnings) can be stopped without causing unemployment. On the whole, it is the longer hours method that has been chosen. The average weekly hours worked by men in manufacturing in Britain in 1938 were 47.7. In April, 1947, the total had fallen to 46.3. Since then it has risen till in April, 1954, the hours worked were 48.2. The hours worked by adult males in 1954 were longer than in 1938.

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The drive to reduce real wages in Britain was directed towards raising the price of foodstuffs—and now the ruling class are trying to increase rents; the inescapable cost of living items.

While workers' resistance, in organised shops, carried on despite Mr. Victor Feather's hankering after a future wage-freeze, has prevented the fall in real earnings that the Tories and the employers wanted, these higher earnings are the result of higher productivity. New machinery, new speed-up and longer hours has meant a higher output per man at work. Taking all workers (for the output-index does not differentiate between sexes), we find that the output of manufacturing industry has risen between 1950 and the first half of 1954 by 13 per cent.; the man-power employed has risen by $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That is, productivity per head has risen by 7 per cent., of which perhaps 2 per cent. is accounted for by longer hours.

The release of capital profits for some capitalists (the shares sold or properties bought are taken up, of course, by other capitalists, mainly the insurance companies and the finance and property concerns—and the Church) and the higher payment of dividends (up to 16 per cent. in 1954 over 1953) and also of higher middle-men profits (up 9 per cent. from 1952 to 1953) have given a flush of spending to the rich. 'Society' is launched again. Is the modern, donnish Savonarola—Butler going to halt this process by his talk of 'saving'? Why, we are told that unless dividends are increased the rich *won't* invest!

For the effect of this rise in productivity is to increase profits. Profits of manufacturing companies and public corporations as shown by the National Income blue-book rose from 1948 to 1953 by 52 per cent.

	£	%
1948 ...	1,170,000,000 ...	100
1949 ...	1,221,000,000 ...	104
1950 ...	1,473,000,000 ...	125
1951 ...	1,764,000,000 ...	150
1952 ...	1,580,000,000 ...	135
1953 ...	1,781,000,000 ...	152

And, in consequence, there has been a scramble to increase the capitalisation of companies (and of property generally) in order to bring values up to this level. The *Financial Times* share (Industrial Ordinary) index has risen, this year only, by nearly 40 per cent. And changes in ownership have been taking place rapidly. Where is the 'inflation'? In the docks—or on the Stock Exchange?

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The second line of action taken by the British ruling class is to increase the squeeze on the overseas areas. The squeeze takes two forms; the first is the classic one of exchanging goods which are not of equal worth in labour value—if you 'sell' someone a commodity you can produce in half an hour for something that takes five hours to produce, clearly you gain. This is reflected in the 'terms of trade'. The 'terms of trade' of the 'U.K. Dependencies' deteriorated by 9 per cent. between 1953 (average) and June, 1954. The terms of trade for the U.K. itself have improved by 18 per cent. since 1951; this represents some £700,000,000 of 1951 imports. There are signs of a slight worsening in this autumn.

The process of securing 'better' terms of trade for the metropolitan country is, of course, a double-edged one. It can destroy the market which would otherwise be provided by exchange of goods, though the City has found a technique through the mechanism of investment for dodging this difficulty, to some extent.

In this situation, the British financial apparatus has taken a modern version of Drake's policy. The City controls the sums the colonies get, in the way of income, for what they sell. These are the sums called the 'Sterling Balances' or 'Sterling Liabilities'. The City has laid hands on these sums. Since 1950, these debts due to the colonies have risen by £454,000,000 to a total (at the end of June, 1954) of £1,189,000,000.

The drive of the ruling class against the workers at home and overseas has won some gains. But they have not won anything decisive. How is the policy of 'investment in success' going to help them? By withdrawing spending money from the middle class, the salaried workers and the mass of the workers either for savings schemes or, in particular, for pension schemes. The idea that the mass of the people are going to buy shares on an H.P. system is clearly drivel. This petty-fogging device is the form that 'Savings' 'investment' takes. This money is put into government savings or into insurance companies, who are now buying shares to the tune of £10,000,000 a week. It cannot, then, be spent on orders for motors, radio sets, clothing, or foodstuffs from British farms, Australia—or Ceylon. This is a means of cutting spending—but hardly of investment in capital goods.

The moral is urged on us; invest in capital goods (*i.e.*, let the rich invest—we can go short, not invest) or spend now and have nothing in the future. The slant given to this argument by Mr. Watson, of the Executive of the Labour Party, is that the British workers should

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sacrifice wage increases now, in order to finance the Colombo Plan—or whatever fancy name is given as a cloak to imperialist investment. The moral anyway is that the mass of the people should have less spending power.

But what guarantee have we got that, if we forego present benefits, either that someone else will not get it and spend it (have a look at the Christmas catalogues of the 'better' West End stores!) or that the capitalists will in fact invest it, or if they do invest it, whether it will be of any good to anybody or just speculation. If they see markets booming, perhaps; but if the incomes of the mass of the people are squeezed so that they cannot buy, where is the market? Then, where are the prospects of profit from investment? Investment goods, we must remember, are goods needed to make consumer goods, to improve transport, to get more food and materials out, in exchange for the products of London and Coventry.

These factors show the differences between the position in the United Kingdom now, and the examples sometimes cited, of the U.S. in its big capital expansion (or of the United Kingdom a hundred years ago), or of the socialist countries. In the former, the masses went without in order to provide huge fortunes for a few which were invested in order to make more profit—with consequent cycles of boom, slumps, wars. In the latter case, of the socialist countries, the workers knew that the capital goods would in fact be usefully invested, would do economic good, and that they would enjoy the benefits.

In fact, of course, investment has been taking place. Gross investment in the U.K. to the tune of £12,000,000,000 (1947-53), overseas to the tune of £1,700,000,000 (1946-53) has been made since the war. But for the cold war and colonial wars the sum could have been doubled. This took place when supplies of materials were in short supply. But now materials are in good supply. Is this the time to add to the danger of a slump by cutting the incomes of the people still further?

So far the struggle of the organised workers has been developing against the lengthened hours and other forms of exploitation. As that struggle develops further, it advances to the attack on monopoly capitalism, under which 1 per cent. of the population own 50 per cent. of the property of the country. A continuance of this situation is what Mr. Butler means by 'prosperity': to end this situation, to bring about real prosperity for the whole people is the task of those who fight for the programme of socialism.

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EAST GERMANY REVISITED

MICHAEL BARRATT BROWN

NO description or photograph can quite prepare one for the actual sight of the sea of rubble that still lies around the little islands of rebuilt buildings that make up Berlin today. And if Berlin seems destroyed, even less remains of Dresden, Nordhausen and Magdeburg. And then to land from the air and find Hitler's great Berlin Tempelhof airport undamaged is a surprise indeed. Are airport buildings more valuable to conquerors than human lives? But there are more shocks to come for one who has not been back to Germany since before the war. What has happened, one wonders, to the huge eagle of the Third Reich, talons plunged deep into the globe, that surmounted the Tempelhof control tower? Utterly incredible as it may seem, it is still there, only the swastika being replaced by the Stars and Stripes.

West Berlin is, as one might expect, smart and flashy and chromium-plated, full of American cars and personnel, bright uniforms and cafés, a cosmopolitan city with a fearful number of beggars reflecting the high figure of unemployment. By contrast, East Berlin, which includes, one had forgotten, the entire walled city of Frederick the Great, the whole centre of the modern capital, seems at first sight somewhat drab and dull. There are few people idling in the streets. The women wear little or no make-up but clothing and shoes are universally neat and new looking. The windows of the H.O. State Stores are full of well-displayed goods—but mainly necessities not luxuries. There are few cars. A Russian soldier is a rare sight and, when seen, always busily going somewhere. The young People's Policemen in their untidy navy blue uniforms mingle easily with the populace with a certain amateurish nonchalance.

What lay behind the surface appearance of these busy people? Were they still Nazis in mind and spirit? Were they dreaming of a Fourth Reich? Of new military adventures? Of re-conquering the Eastern territories beyond the Oder and the Neisse? What was their attitude to West Germany and the West in general? Was there any room for compromise, any chance for the reunification of Germany on terms that could be acceptable to East and West? These were the questions that our party had come to ask and, if

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possible in eight brief days, to answer. We travelled as widely as time permitted—to Leipzig, Jena, Weimar, Erfurt, Eisenach, Buchenwald, Magdeburg. We met and had long discussions with the President of the People's Chamber of Parliament, who was our host, and with many members of the Government, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Trade and of the Interior who most graciously gave up their time to see us. One of our party saw the Prime Minister. We met the heads of the different political parties and also the leaders of the Lutheran Church. We talked to the leaders of the Trade Unions and of the co-operative movement. We visited factories, shops, hospitals, collective farms and schools. We met leading scientists, university professors, teachers, writers and artists and wherever we went we talked to ordinary people.

And we all reached one general conclusion—that there was a complete absence of any evidence of military or aggressive outlook, or mentality and that there was a genuine desire for the reunification of Germany by negotiation under conditions, including free elections, that could be acceptable to the Eastern and Western Powers alike. What were the reasons that led us to this conclusion? The following can only be the statement of my own reasons and does not of course commit any of the other members of our party. But these were my reasons:

First, where were now the old military and junker caste, the Nazis —S.S. and S.A. men—the circle of giant monopolists who gave power to Hitler? We know they are all busily at work in West Germany, but in the East? Not one single S.S. man, monopolist or old military leader has now any position of importance in the new Republic in the East. All the Ministers in the government, all the directors of the state enterprises that have taken over the monopolists' factories are now workers or working engineers and technicians. Most of them served long sentences in concentration camps under Hitler or were refugees from Hitler's persecution in Britain, Russia or America. We did meet one ex-regular army officer, Herr Holman, who is the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party. But his position is particularly interesting. He told us with moving sincerity of his determination to do something, in the years that were left to him, to build a peaceful Germany and wipe out the shame and misery that he and his colleagues had brought upon the German people and the whole world in his life-time. We were told that von Paulus, who is living near Dresden writing his memoirs, has been through something of the same crisis of the soul. Neither

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has any government job but their attitude is indicative of the quite astounding process of re-education through which the people in Eastern Germany are living.

Secondly, who there now owns and controls in the East the great works of Flick, of I. G. Farben, Siemens, Krupp, A.E.G., Zeiss, etc.? For it was the ownership of German industry by these few giant monopolists that gave to them the power to rule the German people, the power that made Hitler, that broke the German workers. At the same time it was their thirst for profit which drove them into military adventures, into the plunder of Europe for food and raw materials and into the employment of slave workers from every continental country. In the East this power has been taken from them. And not only are workers now the ministers, controlling the different branches of industry, and managers of the state factories; but the management side is paralleled at every level by Trade Union representatives elected by the workers, whose official rôle is to control the selection of managers and foremen, the planning of production, the fixing of rates, the execution of safety measures, the institution of health and cultural services in the factory, the training of young workers, etc. We saw this system of workers' control in the Zeiss works, the B.M.W. motor works, the old A.E.G. electric machinery works in Berlin and elsewhere.

Thirdly, what is the nature of the People's Police which has been seen in the West as the core of a revived German Army? To one who knew Germany before the war the greatest change, at least in the East, is the virtual disappearance of all uniforms, police and military, in the streets. The People's Police is obviously an ordinary Police Force with certain rather special functions. Its numbers are given as about 60,000, or one to every 280 population (compared to 110 in the West). It is divided into a traffic and protective police force in blue uniforms, armed, as is customary on the Continent, with pistols; a force of frontier guards in brown uniforms with rifles; and a mobile force, also in brown and armed, we were told by the Minister of Interior, appropriately to deal with the bandits and agents who are frequently sent in from the West, often by parachute, to cause sabotage and other troubles. It is, however, the character of these forces that is most reassuring. It comes wholly under the control of the Minister of Interior, who is a worker in origin, as are all his deputies. Eighty per cent. of the officers are workers and so are the vast majority of the policemen. Recruitment is from volunteers who serve for three years, though a few stay on in the service

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thereafter. We checked this and found it borne out wherever we asked. Nearly all the police live at home. They may marry and vote and belong to the civil service Trade Unions, along with all the other government employees. In each locality they come under the general supervision of the equivalent of a British local authority Watch Committee. Their education while they are in the force, so the Minister of Interior assured us, 'is towards closer and ever more friendly association with the people and towards friendship with all people in the spirit of negotiation and peaceful understanding'. No new army of revenge and conquest here!

Fourthly, what of the education of children and the Free German Youth? This has been taken right out of the hands of those who taught the Nazi racial theories and brought up a generation of young Nazis on 'blood and soil' and 'might is right'. No teacher who taught the superiority of the German 'race' is permitted to teach history or any allied subject. The text books have been entirely re-written and mainly by professors who spent the war years in Britain or America. To take two examples from the basic history teaching text book: first, on the outbreak of the 1914 war 'Imperial Germany was the most aggressive of the Powers'. The second, on the Nuremberg Trials after World War II, 'Predatory German Imperialism had tried to conquer the world . . . the Nazi fascists had prepared the Second World War and had fought the war with indescribable brutality. . . . More than eight million persons—men, women and children—had been murdered in the German concentration camps. Huge areas had been completely devastated, and these criminals had brought hunger, poverty and misery to uncounted numbers. Twelve of the main war criminals were sentenced to death by hanging'. Compare what the text book used in West Berlin schools says today: On 1914, 'The Reich was forced to declare war on Russia'; and on Nuremberg, 'It is regarded as particularly unfair that the same crimes on the allied side were not punished'!

What of the Free German Youth? It is enough to take one look at them to see the contrast with Hitler's Youth. Gone is the regimentation, the shirts and shorts cut from the same material to just the same design, the militaristic marching, apeing their elder brothers' goose-step, the set faces, eyes rigidly to the front, the knives at the belts. Today the shirts and shorts all vary, obviously made at home; discipline is ragged and cheerful; they sing and shout to friends in the crowd; they break line and step to join arms and dance. And their slogans speak of Peace not of war. The portraits in their

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Youth Centres are of Beethoven and Goethe, Heine and Schiller, not of Bismarck, Frederick the Great or the Kaisers, Hindenberg and Hitler.

One especially interesting contact two of us made was with Professor Friedrich, Nobel Prize-winning bio-physicist, who came over from the West to carry on his researches into cancer. We discovered from him the huge sums of money now made available not only to him but for re-establishing all the medical and biochemical researches, for which Germany was once famous and which were tragically neglected under Hitler. We visited his cancer hospital where he is to make radio-active isotopes for cancer treatment and research and assured ourselves that this was no arsenal of atomic guns and bombs as the Western press had suggested! One small but not insignificant indication of the way the tide is running. I did not see a single tin soldier or military toy in any of East Berlin's toy shops. There is little else in similar West Berlin shops. Another contrast: in the West, the Nazi concentration camps have been pulled down, grassed over and trees planted thereon to efface the very memory of them. In the East, at Buchenwald and elsewhere the barbed wire, the crematoria and one or two cells and huts are preserved as a memorial to those who died there and a terrible warning for the future.

Fifthly, what had the Ministers and government officials we met to say on the problems of German reunification? On every wall we had seen the slogan 'Unity for all Germans at one table, and the safeguarding of Peace'. Everyone expressed the desire for more trade, for more cultural contacts, for more Trade Union solidarity between East and West and above all for peaceful reunification. We also gathered that much contact already existed. And in answer to the many questions we put to Ministers about the possibility of free all-German elections, a most important suggestion was made to us. The Government of the German Democratic Republic would be prepared to take the old Weimar constitution as the basis for East-West German discussions on this crucial question. They only asked that the neo-Nazi and para-military organisations in the West should be disbanded and all occupation troops withdrawn so that elections could be really free. The Ministers and others we met frequently expressed great confidence in the strength of the democratic forces that exist, despite everything, in the West and of the real possibility of reaching friendly understanding by negotiation. A meeting we had with Herr Schmitt-Wittmack, the Christian Democratic Deputy

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arrangement as between worker and employer, have proved abortive. Until recently, and despite the clear direction under the Dock Labour Scheme that it is the Local Dock Labour Board which is empowered to impose penalties for infringements, the local port managers took it upon themselves to arbitrarily suspend dockers on the spot for, among other things, a refusal to work overtime. Proper redress seldom ever comes to the suspended worker, because the local appeal tribunal's interpretation of 'work for such periods as are reasonable in his particular case' has too often been that it is a compulsory requirement. On this the Leggett Report made another significant admission:

> At the appeals tribunals it often happens that a dockworker has as his advocate an official of his Union, and a member of his Union sitting as a member of the tribunal takes part in a decision which appears to reject the Trade Union case made on his behalf.

From the day when on January 25 of this year the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers began an overtime ban to uphold the principle that overtime was voluntary (assisted on February 12 by the decision of the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen's Union to ban Sunday work, etc.) grievances accumulated, with the employers refusing negotiation. By the autumn the refusal of the employers to negotiate on 'redundancy' had caused an official strike on September 21 of ship repairers (still proceeding) and conditions in London road passenger transport were causing a similar stand to be taken—which caused a strike of bus workers in October. Finally a dispute about sorting meat carcases in the Royal Albert Dock on September 28 brought matters to a head. On this the employers were willing to negotiate but not on 103 other outstanding issues. The men came out in the Royal group of docks. Thereupon the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers called a strike for October 4 if the employers continued their refusal to 'discuss all outstanding disputes over pay and working conditions'. The employers would not budge. From October 4 the strike gathered volume. The members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, unofficially and without any strike pay came out on strike. It spread to Southampton, Merseyside, Hull. Tally clerks, 'permanent men' and other grades joined in. By mid-October all the 19 branches of the Watermen's Union had voted for strike action.

No vote was taken by the officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union: but in mass meetings the vote for staying out on strike was repeatedly taken. At an official Albert Hall meeting the officials made no attempt to take a vote.

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But Mr. Deakin was not silent. One day after the anxious Minister of Labour on October 16 had announced a Court of Inquiry, Mr. Deakin performed his well-known impersonation of the Fat Boy in *Pickwick Papers* ('I wants to make your flesh creep') announcing 'a conspiracy to create chaos and confusion'. He actually went on to say:

> This is a Communist attempt to bring about a stoppage of work for which I say there is no good reason.

In his speech (duly head-lined by the *Daily Herald* of October 18 as STRIKES ARE RED PLOT—DEAKIN) though Mr. Deakin admitted that:

> I have been regarded as a person who has a phobia, an anti-red outlook which is out of reality.

it should be noted that he added:

> I am going to say with great seriousness and deliberation that the truth of my assertions and statements will be very amply proved within the next few weeks.

He forgot to add that one of his previous 'red plots' of five years ago was also to be 'proved' within a few weeks— but that no more was heard of it.*

There are, however, more serious considerations that demand attention from members of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The dockers are not blinded by Tory blinkers nor are they inert from the bludgeoning they receive from the officials. The dockers can see and are fighting against the drive of the employers to extend the normal working day and impose regular night work. They regard overtime as a necessary evil only until such times as their wage rates and fall-back pay, which lag lamentably behind the rising cost of living, are substantially increased. There is no Tory sunshine for the dockers whose basic rate of 132s. is short by 31s. (if compared with what his wage could buy in 1939) or whose fall-back pay, fixed at 88s. in 1947, has never moved since then.

Far from being a Communist conspiracy, the dockers' strike, unexampled since 1926, historic in its unanimity in the Port of London, and supported by five other major ports involving a total of over 44,000 dock workers, or half the full manpower of all ports in the country, is a challenge. It challenges the Deakin policy of amicable working with the Tories, co-operation with the employers and all that flows from this: namely wage restraint, intensification

*Mr. Attlee's naming of 'Communists' as responsible for an explosion near Portsmouth in autumn, 1950, turned out similarly to be a cock-and-bull story. It has been so with a hundred other myths mouthed by right-wing politicians in the last 30 years.

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of work, increased rents, arms drive, German rearmament, restrictions on free democratic expression and participation of the rank and file in Union affairs.

The rank and file of the Union in the docks have demonstrated their power to win concessions, and also that Mr. Deakin holding the strings of the machine is not so all-powerful. He cut an insignificant figure when the rank and file were roused to take a hand in their own affairs. It was they who pulled the strings to decide the fate of a vital Trade Union principle, it was they who by their unity in struggle won the hearts and solidarity of tens of thousands of working people; and it is they who by maintaining this same unity and determination can change the policy of cap-in-hand to the Tory Government and employers which for too long has guided the actions of the right-wing leaders from Mr. Deakin downwards.

By making it their business 'not to leave-it-to-the-leaders', the great mass of the dockers on the job and in the branches can compel the docks trade commitees to carry out their wishes and mandates, and to reject what are often distorted views of the wants and democratic rights of the members put forward by the right-wing permanent officers of the Union. Furthermore, they have the ball at their feet to go forward. They can win the right to *elect* their full-time officers, *leaders of their choice* whose loyalty will be tested in struggle for their demands and well being. Loyalty to those electing them shall come first and all the time, and not to those in high places who in the *permanency of office* as full-time officials forget their class and the real functions of Trade Unionism. To set out to do these things is not a Communist conspiracy: it is but to seek what is accepted in many other Trade Unions and what the pioneers of the Transport and General Workers' Union intended should be. We in the Transport and General Workers' Union have this duty to perform. It can only be done *inside* the Union and not by running away in disgust into other Unions where the members are successfully reaching towards a similar objective.

Aren't we all in the Trade Union movement disgusted with the rôle of the Transport and General Workers' Union leadership at the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference, where the block vote of a million and a quarter is cast for policies which are flagrantly unrepresentative of the feelings of the members? A recent most glaring example is the vote in the name of the Union for the rearmament of West Germany without any consultation with the membership. Yet, the London Regional Committee speaking

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for 350,000 and the Scottish Regional Committee speaking for over 100,000 members have declared against German rearmament. The big effort that needs to be made is to turn this feeling of disgust into a positive and constructive channel. Mass active interest will ensure that never again will the Union's vote be cast without proper consultation with the members.

The dockers are not alone in their effort to bring about a decisive change in policy and leadership, and to establish democracy in the Union. The busmen in many areas of the country, with the London busmen in the van, are breaking through the conspiracy of silence and inaction of their leaders on the deep-rooted grievances that have brought about crisis in the industry. The ban on overtime, followed by the strike of London busmen (surpassing the strike of 1937 in its solidarity) for a decent wage and better conditions, signals the return to militant fighting Trade Unionism not only in London, but in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. This militant healthy Trade Unionism has set going negotiations for increased wages and better working conditions. The busmen's declaration, supported by garages and branches overwhelmingly, includes the call for

> the restoration of our democratic right to be able to elect any member in compliance to any office within the Union: for our full democratic rights within the Three Section Conference and the Section Conferences; the election within every garage and depot of a committee whose purpose it will be to campaign for our wages and conditions demands, our democratic rights and to give every possible publicity to our demands.

These democratic rights, as demanded by dockers and busmen, can be won with the help of the rank and file of all other sections in the Union. They will have the assistance of Trade Unionists in all Unions who prize their achievements in this field. The Rules Conference of the Union in 1956 can become an historic event in this great Union. It is up to the rank and file to make it so by restoring a free and unfettered democracy playing its rightful and progressive rôle in the Labour and Trade Union movement in Britain. For the strikes were not actions on impulse over some minor grievances. The issues at stake were whether dockers and busmen would continue to be gagged and bound to a policy of sacrifice of hard won gains (in wage standards and working conditions) or to make their stand as free Trade Unionists for the objects which the Union was built to achieve, namely

> the obtaining and maintaining of just and proper hours of work, rates of wages, and to endeavour by all means in their power to control the industries in which the members were engaged.

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TERROR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

C. ALLEN

TERROR is raging in Iran. Oil is flowing once more from its oil-fields: and blood is flowing in its prisons and concentration camps. Its rulers have betrayed their country's interests to the Anglo-American oil trusts. The price of that betrayal is the blood of innocent men. All who opposed the betrayal are being hunted down. All democratic rights are suppressed, with wholesale murder and horrible tortures. The latest victim, Hussein Fatemi, Foreign Secretary 15 months ago in the Moussadeq cabinet that nationalised the oil industry, was executed after prolonged tortures: in his dying words he declared that the British were responsible for his murder.

General Zahedi, during the war the chief Nazi agent in Iran, then coming to power with United States aid by the *coup d'etat* of August 19, 1953, has sold his country to Anglo-American imperialism to be a source of their oil profits and a base for their war plans. The suppression of the Tudeh Party, which headed the national liberation movement, was the prelude to the suppression of all democratic and patriotic organisations. Over one thousand army officers have been arrested, over ten thousand political opponents of Zahedi are in prison. Hundreds have been sent to die under torture in the 'death islands' of the Persian Gulf. The one-time agent of Hitler is adept at fascist barbarities. These Iranian atrocities have shocked the world. In France, even conservative writers like Mauriac, Duhamel, Cocteau, have raised their voice to demand an end to the executions. From Britain, with greater reason, the voices of protest should be raised: *End the Iranian Atrocities.*

In Iraq terror is raging. Nuri Said in his few months as head of the government has abolished all political parties, suppressed all opposition newspapers, imprisoned opponents to the number of over two thousand. In the prisons fingers are burned, needles stuck in heels, and there are other horrible tortures. Not only has a leading Communist been hanged but imprisonment for life is the penalty stated for those suspected of membership of the Communist Party of Iraq. For others, such as members of the peace movement, a new law prescribes that they may be deprived of their nationality. Here too the methods of the Nazis are the model followed.

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Terror is raging in Egypt. The military dictatorship of Nasser has filled prisons and concentration camps with opponents, some arrested soon after the *coup d'etat* of July, 1952, some at each crisis of the régime since then and some in these last few weeks. This autumn 60 professors and lecturers suspected of a progressive outlook were dismissed from the universities, and 300 students were expelled. Academic freedom is ended. Newspapers are suppressed. The accusation of 'communism' results in long-term imprisonment. Trials are held in military 'courts', without proper defence or right of appeal.

Terror is raging in Pakistan. Ghulam Mohammed, the Governor-General, who overthrew the legally elected government of East Pakistan six months ago, imprisoned the ministers and placed the greater part of the country under military dictatorship, has now abolished the Pakistan constituent assembly and placed Pakistan as a whole under despotic rule, the finance for which is contributed by the United States Government. In these last weeks political opponents in hundreds have been cast into gaol.

Terror is raging in Turkey. Following the American-inspired Turkey-Pakistan Pact, those suspected of membership of the (already illegal) Turkish Communist Party were arrested, democratic rights were reduced and men considered by *The Times* to be amongst the leading journalists of Turkey have been cast into prison.

The iron hand is stretched out over Cyprus. No one is permitted to advocate Enosis (union with Greece) or even to reprint speeches in the British Parliament on this subject. Cyprus is a crown colony, Pakistan a part of the British Empire. The other countries are independent sovereign states in name; but in fact are dependent on the Anglo-American imperialists, who want to use these territories as strategic bases for their war plans. For this they require ruthless dictatorship to suppress the resistance of the peoples. Hence, in the countries of the Middle East, this terror, which must be indicted by the conscience of mankind: and, at the head of the indictment stands the Iranian Atrocities.

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U.S. ELECTIONS

DEREK KARTUN

THE Eighty-fourth (lame duck) Congress starts work next month. 'Lame duck' because the Democrats won a slender majority in the November elections and the Republican Administration can now look forward to two years of sharp guerrilla warfare. The Democrats will use their majority in Congress and their important committee chairmanships to pile up political capital in readiness for the presidential elections of 1956.

It was a curious victory in certain respects for the Democrats told the voters that President Eisenhower needed a Democratic Congress in order to carry out his programme. Why? Because the majority of his own party did not support it. The Republicans claimed that their two years' record was somehow better and cleaner than that of the Democrats before them. Both sides claimed that the other was corrupt. Republicans denounced Democrats as 'the Party of treason'. Democrat bankers and industrialists denounced the Republicans as the party of vested interests. Both parties claimed to be best at keeping the peace and talking tough to Russia.

Now all this was a little confusing, and for the American voter to make any sense of his vote he had to brush these arguments and much else aside and keep his mind firmly fixed on fundamentals. But when we come to ask what it was that the voter had in mind, we find ourselves up against geography. The United States of America is not a country as Britain is a country. It is a continent-sized combination of five main regions with widely differing characteristics and problems. And within these regions there are profound local differences too. No generalisation about the election and its result, therefore, has very much validity. A more detailed approach, however, yields more fruitful answers.

First the overall result. The Democrats captured control of the Senate by winning 48 seats to the Republicans' 47, and control of the House of Representatives by a 29-seat majority (232 to 203 seats). In the big shuffle of local posts they captured eight State Governorships. What do we find when we break these figures down?

The most positive and striking thing is the marked setback for the more extreme reactionaries, the supporters of Joseph McCarthy, the 'little Joes' from other States. Meek of Illinois, Clardy and

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Ferguson of Michigan, Kersten of Wisconsin (the McCarthy country), Busbey, Vail, Graham, Canwell—all fascist-minded careerists and all defeated. A whirlwind red-baiting tour of Montana and Wyoming by Vice-President Nixon failed to hold these States for the Republicans. Screaming 'Red!' was no longer the way to win a seat in Congress—though here regional differences can be seen. Two arch-McCarthyites won in Colorado and Illinois, and one of the worst Negro-hating backwoodsmen of the South, Strom Thurmond, won a resounding victory in his State.

Just as some of the worst candidates were thrown out, so a number of moderately liberal candidates—let us not put the thing too high—were returned. Often these men won with united labour support. Thus, James Roosevelt won for the Democrats in California, and Detroit returned its first Negro representative in Charles C. Diggs. Homer Ferguson in Michigan was beaten by a Trade Union official. In Oregon the Senate seat was won by a Democratic journalist who has campaigned for years against the misuse of the State's natural resources by the big trusts.

What were people actually voting about? 'The foremost issue jeopardising Republican prospects is unemployment and underemployment', wrote the *Christian Science Monitor* on the eve of the poll. This turned out to be true. There are 1,800,000 more unemployed now than when the Republicans swept the board two years ago. Coal mining is in slump, steel production is one-third lower, unemployment is heavy in the automobile industry, textiles are suffering. And in the areas affected the voters were protesting against the failures of the Republican-dominated 83rd Congress in the only way that they felt was open to them—by voting Democrat. They called the 83rd the 'give-away, do-wrong Congress' because it handed over national power, oil and atomic resources to the giant companies, and because it did nothing for the working people at all.

Some farm votes were lost in this way too. Total income of farmers is $2,300 millions lower this year than it was two years ago. Many farmers voted accordingly.

According to Mr. Walter Lippmann of the *New York Herald Tribune*, 'from Minnesota to Massachusetts the advantage was with the liberals of both parties. . . . The right-wing Republicans are a minority in a minority Party, and Mr. Eisenhower has failed to build a strong party around them'. And Mr. Joseph Harsch of the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that 'the idea of war has lost

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its appeal since the Soviet Union acquired atom bombs. The phrase "preventive war" has been notable for its absence from the current campaign. . . . There wasn't a word about "rollback" or "liberation" or the slightest overtone of "preventive war".'

Both of these commentators go too far. Whatever differences may exist between individual Republicans, that Party (*pace* Mr. Lippmann) remains the organised political expression of the very biggest capital. However much the politicians may have found it expedient in the new and rather better atmosphere to talk less of preventive war and more of jobs, homes and wages, one should not imagine with Mr. Harsch that there wasn't plenty of warmongering and red-baiting of a subtler kind in the election. None the less, the positive trend is there: though not very much more than a trend, since the see-saw hardly dipped a great deal. Almost all the majorities were narrow.

Fighting against a heavy smear campaign, the American Labour Party in New York (at the time of writing) was believed to have won close to 50,000 votes. And also in New York, a courageous and most difficult campaign by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, standing squarely in defence of the Communist Party and its policy, brought in close to 2,000 votes. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a famous veteran of the American Labour movement, now goes to jail for three years as a framed victim of the Smith Act. Smith Act or not, it is still her slogan of 'Co-existence or no existence' that will be remembered and justified when the Republocrats have come and done their worst and gone again.

An observer in the United States, writing to the *Labour Monthly*, sums it all up in these words:

> Actually the outcome does not fully reflect the discontent of the masses. This is because the Democratic Party leaders (including the top labor 'skates') soft-pedalled all the election issues—the economic situation, McCarthyism and peace. This sabotage very substantially cut down the Party's victory.
>
> This is a rebuke to the whole Eisenhower crew, but already the Democrats are playing up to Eisenhower with their pledges of support and co-operation in Congress. The Democratic line of respect, if not awe, of Eisenhower is the best way to set the stage for him to win a second term in the election of 1956.

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WALTER STEVENS

26 September, 1904 — 24 October, 1954

The death of Walter Stevens, General Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, following a motor-car accident, at the early age of 50, robs the working-class movement of one of its foremost and most dearly-loved representatives, a model and inspirer of the militant Trade Union leadership which is today coming to the forefront, and a tireless champion of the battle for socialism. He was every inch a fighter, and as our readers know from his contributions in* Labour Monthly, *a doughty working-class propagandist. His brilliant, creative and forceful leadership, enriched by his deep Communist convictions, won him the respect of his enemies, at the same time as he achieved the honour to become the principal target of their denunciation and hatred.*

Stevens, leaving school before he was 14, worked as a skilled electrician until in 1938 he became London Area Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union. In 1942 he became Assistant Secretary and in 1948 General Secretary of the Union. He was re-elected unopposed in 1953. As General Secretary he symbolised the Union's militant and progressive policy. He transformed its Journal into a publication second to none in the Trade Union movement. He pioneered the unique venture of a Union residential college, and, understanding the power of the past to inspire the future, commissioned murals by Cliff Rowe depicting the great traditions of the movement from the Tolpuddle Martyrs to the General Strike.

But his influence and example was felt far outside his own Union. Year after year at the Trades Union Congress he challenged the General Council's Defence of the wage freeze. He tore to shreds the arguments of Stafford Cripps that wage increases could not come out of profits: he exploded Tewson's pathetic prophecy that the wage freeze would reduce the cost of living; and finally in September, 1950, in the teeth of the General Council's bitter hostility he successfully carried the E.T.U. resolution rejecting the wage freeze.

Confronted with the Electrical Contracting employers' attempt to re-impose the wage freeze in 1953, he led his members' struggle for decent living standards. He guided the brilliant strategy of the nine weeks' guerilla strike, which achieved victory not only for the electricians but for the whole working class.

Walter Stevens joined the Communist Party in 1946. His name will be forever remembered with honour in the annals of the British working class as a fighter for socialism to which he gave such true and valiant service throughout his life.

*His contributions this year were his June issue review of Professor Bernal's *Science and Industry in the 19th Century* and his October survey of the Brighton T.U.C.

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WHY I AM A COMMUNIST

WILLIAM MORRIS

[Sixty years ago William Morris wrote 'Why I am a Communist'. It was printed by James Tochatti who published it in 1894 as part of a penny pamphlet in a series issued by Liberty Press. The name of the press appears within a designed heading, where a winged figure is supported by two workers each wearing a cap of liberty and bearing up between them the famous slogan* AGITATE, EDUCATE, ORGANISE. *Our readers will be interested to note in this article, of which we print below the main part, that Morris draws the clear distinction between socialism as the first stage and fully developed communism as the second stage of the future of society.—Ed., L.M.]*

OBJECTION has been made to the use of the word 'Communism' to express fully-developed Socialism, on the ground that it has been used for the Community-Building, which played so great a part in some of the phases of Utopian Socialism, and is still heard of from time to time nowadays. Of Communism in this sense I am not writing now; it may merely be said in passing that such experiments are of their nature non-progressive; at their best they are but another form of the mediaeval monastery, withdrawals from the Society of the day, really implying hopelessness of a general change; which is only attainable by the development of Society as it is; by the development of the consequences of its faults and anomalies, as well as of what germ of real Society it contains.

This point of mistaken nomenclature being cleared off, it remains to ask what real Communism is, and the answer is simple: it is a state of Society the essence of which is *Practical Equality of condition*. Practical, *i.e.*, equality as modified by the desires, and capacity for enjoyment, of its various members. This is its economical basis; its ethical basis is the *habitual* and full recognition of man as a social being, so that it brings about the habit of making no distinction between the common welfare and the welfare of the individual.

I am a Communist, therefore, because—first, it seems to me that mankind is not thinkable outside of Society; and secondly, because there is no other basis, economical and ethical, save that above-stated, on which a true Society can be formed; any other basis makes

*Now very rare and not available in the 26-volume Collected Edition.

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waste and unnecessary suffering an essential part of the system. In short I can see no other system under which men can live together except these two, Slavery and Equality.

After explaining the class division and the privilege of the 'useless' upper class in ancient slavery, mediaeval serfdom and modern wage-slavery ('in our own days the method of exercising privilege has changed from the use of the arbitrary accident of birth, to the acquirement (by any means not recognised as illegal) of an indeterminate amount of wealth which enables its possessor to belong to the useless class') Morris writes:

It would not be very profitable to discuss which of these three systems of inequality, to wit, Chattel Slavery, Serfdom, or Wage-Earning, is *per se* the better or the worse; it is enough to say that since the present one has come down to us in due course of development from the others, it gives us a hope of progress which could not have belonged to them. And in fact a new theory of Society can now be put forward, not as a mere abstraction, but as a root change in Social conditions which is in actual course of realisation.

This theory is Communism; which says: In a true Society the capacities of all men can be used for their mutual well being; the due unwasteful use of those capacities produces wealth in the proper sense of the word and cannot fail to produce it; this wealth produced by the Community can only be fully used by the Community; for if some get more than they need, that portion which cannot be used must of necessity be wasted, and the whole Community is impoverished thereby; and again further impoverished by the necessity for the producers having to work harder than they otherwise need; which in its turn brings about grievous and burdensome inequality, for all men feel unnecessary work to be slavish work.

Morris then turns to the method, on which there are 'divers opinions', and explains how from the earlier propagandist days of the 'eighties the stage has been reached of working class action.

What we have to do first is to make Socialists. That we shall always have to do until the change is come. Some time ago we seemed to have nothing else to do than that, and could only do it by preaching; but the times are changed; the movement towards a communal life has spread wonderfully within the last three or four years; the instinctive feeling towards Socialism has at last touched the working classes, and they are moving toward the great change; how quickly it is not easy for us, who are in the midst of the move-

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ment, to determine; but this instinct is not leading them to demand the *full* change directly, rather they are attacking those positions which must be won, before we come face to face with the last citadel of Capitalism, the privilege of rent, interest, and profit. Broadly speaking they see that it is possible to wrest from their masters an improved life, better livelihood, more leisure, treatment in short as citizens, not as machines. I say from their masters; for there is nowhere else whence it can come. . . . Neither need we fear that when the working classes have gained the above-mentioned advantages they will stop there. They will not and they cannot. For the results of the struggle will force on them the responsibilities of managing their own affairs, and mastership will wane before Communal management almost before people are aware of the change at hand.

This will bring us at last to the period of what is now understood by the word Socialism when the means of production and the markets will be in the hands of those who can use them, *i.e.*, the operatives of various kinds; when great accumulations of wealth will be impossible, because money will have lost its privilege; when everybody will have an opportunity of well-doing offered him: and this period of incomplete Socialism will, I believe, gradually melt into true Communism without any violent change. At first, indeed, men will not be absolutely equal in condition; the old habit of rewarding excellence or special rare qualities with extra money payment will go on for a while; and some men will possess more wealth than others; but as on the one hand they will have to work in order to possess that wealth, and as on the other the excess of it will procure them but small advantage in a Society tending towards equality, as in fact they begin to understand that in a Community where none are poor, extra wealth beyond the real needs of a man cannot be *used,* we shall begin to cease estimating worth by any standard of material reward, and the position of complete equality as to condition will be accepted without question. I do not say that gifted persons will not try to excel; but their excellence will be displayed not at the expense of their neighbours but for their benefit.

By that time also we shall have learned the true secret of happiness, to wit, that it is brought about by the pleasurable exercise of our energies; and since opportunity will be given for everyone to do the work he is fitted for under pleasant and unburdensome conditions, there will be no drudgery to escape from, and consequently no competition to thrust one's neighbour out of his place in order to attain to it.

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Starting with the axiom that Communism 'will concern itself with the administration of things rather than the government of men', Morris adds:

It is a matter of course that since everybody would share to the full in the wealth and good life won by the whole community, so everybody would share in the responsibility of carrying on the business of the community; but this business of administration they would, as sensible people, reduce as much as possible, that they might be the freer to use their lives in the pleasure of living, and creating, and knowing, and resting.

All this I believe we can and shall reach directly by insisting on the claim for the communisation of the means of production; and that claim will be made by the workers when they are fully convinced of its necessity; I believe further that they are growing convinced of it, and will one day make their claim good by using the means which the incomplete democracy of the day puts within their reach. That is they will at last form a wide spread and definite Socialist party, which will, by using the vote, wrest from the present possessing classes the instruments which are now used to govern the people in the interest of the possessing classes, and will use them for effecting the change in the basis of society, which would get rid of the last of the three great oppressions of the world.

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Book Reviews

TOWARDS FREEDOM

Allies for Freedom, Report of the Second Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Countries within the sphere of British Imperialism, London, April, 1954. (148 pp. The Communist Party. *6s.*)

> No matter what country I have been in, I have met no social system better than that in Britain.
>
> (Mr. Sam Watson, September, 1954.)

THE foregoing is typical of the deception carried on by the 'labour lackeys' of imperialism. To effectively combat it, our comrades must get a clear understanding of what is going on in the colonies and the relation of colonial exploitation to the economy here at home. For this purpose the report of 'the Second Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Countries within the sphere of British Imperialism' is invaluable. The opening statement by R. P. Dutt, 'The Way Forward', will repay the closest study. Here on page 14 is something that Watson and Co. must hide from the workers of Britain but which we should vigorously proclaim. Speaking of the economic crises in Britain Dutt says:—

> The measures adopted by the British Imperialists to meet this crisis of their economy have been based above all on the heaviest increase of colonial exploitation.

He then goes on to prove this assertion beyond the shadow of a doubt, and adds on page 16, 'In plain words, in the British colonies and semi-colonies hundreds of millions are hungry, disease-ridden, ill-clothed and ill-housed from the cradle to the grave'. And it is on such exploitation with its consequent misery and suffering that the social system of which Mr. Watson boasts is based. But the revolt of the colonial peoples, expressing itself in a variety of forms in all parts of the colonial empire has brought about a crisis of imperialism which will impose ever-increasing burdens on the people here. These burdens will only be removed through the complete defeat of imperialism and this can only be accomplished by the close understanding and a close alliance of the British workers and the Liberation forces of the colonial countries. Our party comrades and the genuine left-wingers in the labour movement must become thoroughly convinced of the need for this alliance if they are going to succeed in convincing the working class. A resolution once in a while is not enough. These Liberation forces are battling against almost overwhelming forces drawn mainly from the ranks of the working class of this country. I wish every trade unionist could be got to read the report from Malaya. I hope every party comrade and party sympathiser will read it. The courage, the endurance and the unconquerable determination of the Liberation forces there, after six years of unexampled heroism in the struggle for independence, should be an inspiration to all of us. In 1948 the war was started by the imperialists. On pages 36 and 37 of the report we read:—

> In accordance with plans drawn up beforehand, the so-called 'Emergency Regulations' were promulgated. Representatives of the Party, and responsible persons in various revolutionary organisations were arrested, one after another. The papers of the Party, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions and the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army Ex-Comrades Association were closed down and members of their staffs arrested. . . .

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> Between the night of June 20th (1948, W.G.) and the morning of June 21st alone, more than 600 patriots of various nationalities, men and women, young and old, were arrested; more than 300 trade union and progressive organisations were closed down. From that day to the end of the year—that is, within half a year—13,341 persons were put in prison or deported, and nearly 400 persons murdered.

That's a terrible indictment, yet we know that similar barbarities on an even greater scale are being perpetrated in Kenya today. Every attempt has been made to seduce the workers of Malaya. Government sponsored unions have taken the place of the real trade unions. Deakin, and those associated with him, in the 'free' trade unions have played a truly sorry part in this game of hobbling the Malayan working class. They even gave them 'free' elections for the municipalities, utterly spurious, of course, as the report tells us on page 48:

> For instance, while the population of Singapore is more than one million, only 21,537 took part. . . . The poverty of support for these 'elections' is again forcefully shown in the fact that among the five elected, the candidate with the most votes obtained 2,801.

Read of the merciless campaign to 'starve' the guerillas, of the savage bombings and the general terror directed against the working class; of the profits from rubber and the cuts in workers' wages and you will get something like a picture of what imperialism means to the colonial people.

In Iraq there is a special terror being conducted against the Communist Party, the progressives and Peace forces under the direction of Anglo-American imperialism. The report from that semi-colony, read by Idris Cox, is truly revealing. Read it, my comrades, read and get busy building the Alliance for Freedom.

I would like to deal with the other sections—India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ceylon, Trinidad, Ireland, Canada and Australia—but you must read them for yourselves. I conclude with a quotation from the report from British Guiana. It is from a young poet, 'who is now being detained in prison':

You come in warships
Terrible with death
I know your hands are red
With Korean blood
I know your finger
Trembles on a trigger
And yet I curse you—
Stranger khaki-clad!
British soldier, man in khaki,
Careful how you walk,
My ancestor Accabre
Is groaning in his grave.
At night he wakes and watches
With fire in his eye
Because you march upon his breast
And stamp upon his heart.
Although you come in thousands from the sea
Although you walk like locusts in the street
Although you point your gun straight at my heart
I clench my fist above my head! I sing my song of freedom!

So get this report, clench your fist and join the march for Freedom.

WILLIAM GALLACHER

THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY

Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War, a new translation by Rex Warner. (558 pp. Penguin Books. 5*s*.)

THUCYDIDES, that pioneer in the creation of a science of history, needs no recommendation to historical materialists, nor do we lack proof that Rex Warner can produce an

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accurate and readable translation of a Greek classic. There is, therefore, a welcome for this new Thucydides with its helpful Introduction, its three maps and one plan, its clear type, and (as things go now) its moderate price.

This is not to say, of course, that everything is perfect. Up-to-dateness is the hallmark of Penguin translations and not every method of achieving it is equally good. To say that if Thucydides were writing now he would use footnotes is plausible. It does not follow that to pluck phrases out of his elaborately finished sentences and put them at the bottom of the page can be done without loss. Again, when we are told that the plague 'destroyed more life than any other single factor' or that the clash in which Cleon and Brasidas died was 'a panic-ridden affair' we feel that the quest for the up-to-date has landed us in journalese. In the famous sentence in which Thucydides makes tacit reference to his rival Herodotus and expresses the fear that his avoidance of the mythological may damage the popularity of his work, Warner substitutes the word *romantic* for *mythological*. This sacrifices a historical point of real weight—the claim of Thucydides to have freed history from mythological explanations. To credit Thucydides with the remark that it was the shortage of *money* which made the Trojan expedition, and still earlier expeditions, small is to fall into a cruder kind of anachronism. But one must not exaggerate such points. The job has been done in a most workman-like way and ought to achieve the desirable end of making Thucydides popular with a wide public. It will be a pity, though, if it makes all readers believe that Thucydides thought human nature unchangeable. The words I have italicised in the following sentence

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misrepresent, I think, the meaning of the Greek. 'It will be enough for me if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (*human nature being what it is*) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future.' This makes Thucydides take sides on a question which was not in his mind at all. What he is concerned to say is that experience of human affairs, that is history, leads us to expect that the future will be like enough to the past to enable us to profit from experience.

BENJAMIN FARRINGTON

BRITISH GUIANA

Forbidden Freedom, by Cheddi Jagan, with a foreword by Tom Driberg, M.P. (96 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *3s. 6d.*)

THE suspension of the British Guiana constitution stirred the British Labour movement as no colonial issue has stirred it for many years, and it is easy to see why. Thousands of Labour workers, who had honestly believed in the promise of self-government for the colonial peoples, found that the promise was something to be brushed aside—brutally by Lyttelton, abjectly by the Labour leaders—as soon as a small colony took it seriously.

Dr. Jagan's book gives the whole story—more fully than it has yet been told in this country; the deep poverty (6s. 3d. a month relief for the indigent and unemployed), the grip of vested interests on the Government which made it impossible to end that poverty, the antagonism between Africans and Indians and the building of the People's Progressive Party in which all races were united. Then, the Government which the constitution-makers had never expected and its first modest measures: repeal of the Ordinance which kept many British publications out of Guiana (turned down in the Upper House); a Bill to extend adult franchise to the country districts; a Bill to compel landlords to carry out their legal obligation to repair the drainage on their tenants' fields (described in the Upper House as totalitarian dictatorship and turned down).

Lyttelton's White Paper charges, from arson to undermining the boy scouts, are patiently answered point by point, and so is Transport House's version of the trade union situation. As Tom Driberg says in his foreword, from the point of view of the Labour movement, 'this book is the case-history of a classic example of *HOW NOT TO DO IT*'. But above all what has been done must be undone, and if this book is widely read it will help that job.

B.E.

COMPARATIVE DEATH RATES

Several correspondents have written to point out, in relation to the Table of 'Death Rates in Leading Countries 1913-53', quoted from the Report of A. I. Mikoyan to the Supreme Soviet last April, and reprinted in our November issue, p. 485, that certain modifying factors need to be taken into account. The crude death rate is affected by the age composition of the population, and in consequence low death rates could be quoted from smaller and even backward countries without indicating a high social standard. This does not detract from the significance of the advance in the U.S.S.R. from 30.2 per thousand in 1913 to 8.9 in 1953. The reference to 'the lowest in the world' should be corrected to 'the lowest among major countries'; and the statement that 'you cannot play tricks with the death rate' should be understood as referring, as the context indicates, to the customary tricks of anti-Soviet economists to make fantastic re-calculations of the figures of Soviet wages and prices, and not as excluding the modifying factors in respect of the crude death rate which correctly need to be taken into account. The reference to infantile mortality in Scotland as 'five times as great among the unskilled workers as among the rich' should be corrected to read 'post-natal mortality' (between one month and one year); the infantile mortality was three times as great. We are indebted to correspondents who have pointed out these corrections.—ED., *L.M.*

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The One You Forgot?

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The U.S. Scene

HERE ARE some comments on the U.S. elections by a veteran trade unionist in Michigan. The results, he writes, 'should give the organised Labour movement, including all the progressive folks, food for thought: where are we going from now on? Is it necessary to be the goats of all the bedraggled bob-tails and wildcats of the Republican and Democratic Parties? While the results show an electoral defeat for the Eisenhower Administration and its more open Big Business policy, the Democratic Party, through which the masses still try to express their opposition to Big Business, did not attack the Eisenhower administration and offer an alternative. On the contrary, its candidates often asked for votes on the ground that Eisenhower needs Democrats in Congress. Their leaders and top candidates often went further, by waving their enthusiasm for the Cold War, for "more firmness" overseas as their main banner. The country's revulsion against McCarthyism was not allowed to express itself fully, by the calculated avoidance of this key issue. The Democratic Party generally failed to campaign for civil rights anywhere.' Our friend ends with 'thanks to your many contributors for their articles, of tremendous value in my activities.' Best wishes to him and to our friends all over the world.

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